

Delegate Report

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America

73 rd Annual Diocesan Assembly

May 2 and 3, 1975

Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston

Cambridge, Mass.

On Friday morning, May 2nd, 1975, the first session of the 73rd Annual Diocesan Assembly was opened in the beautiful Holy Trinity Church of Greater Boston with the invocation by Most Reverend Archbishop Torcom Manoogian, Primate. The routine of recognition of the delegates and approval of the 1974 minutes was carried out, as was the election of assembly officials and appointment of courtesy committees.

In the morning session the address of the Primate was given. He stated that the purpose of our gathering together was "to consider the issues that confront our Diocese, our Church, our people." It is for the oneness of our church, the union of all of us in the oneness that the diocese represents, and not to be just separate parishes. Separately we can do little but to live out our days. Together there is no limit to what we can accomplish. This I believe is the premise, the foundation, on which the survival of the Armenian people as an ethnic group depends."

The Diocese has partly reorganized its headquarters staff, bringing new people into service.

- 1) Stephen Kambourian - executive director
- 2) Syran Polvetzian - program director
- 3) Valeria Goeljian - executive secretary of the Council of Religious Education
- 4) Sylvia Der Stepanian - Director of Armenian Education and Language Labs.

These people may be utilized in the fields above noted.

Programs for the youth group continue. With the Armenian studies program, young people have been able to go to see Erivan and Etchmiazin and study in Armenia for a month each summer.

The Primate stated that "the unity of our church, the oneness of its structures, the bringing together of all our people before our altars, remains as a fundamental objective of our Diocese and one that has unfortunately eluded our most determined pursuit." It is our greatest desire to unify the Church in our American Diocese into one structure and one body. This is regarded as basic to the well-being of the Church and of the community, and in this no one can suffer any real loss.

St. Nersess' school has begun to produce graduates, priests have been brought into our Diocese, but the need is far greater than our supply. Dozens of areas are open for planning a church and have need of a pastor.

This year the centennial of the birth of Haik Kavookjian will be observed - to share our expression of love for him, for the service, benefaction and leadership he has given to our community.

Another is Dadour Dadourian, who has given much of himself.

Parish assignments have gone up considerably. The Diocese has been much concerned about this. More than half of the Diocesan income is being generated by the Diocese, where 10 years ago, 75% was by the Parishes. Stewardship program, bookstore, national appeals, Diocesan programs, all have helped. Our assignment goes from \$1080 to \$1,350 annually.

The Armenian Church Endowment Fund was established by the Assembly with Father Artoon Sempadian as executive director. Dadour Dadourian and Haik Kavookian spearheaded its organization. The Fund will serve specific programs of the Diocese, needs of our Church in other regions, support the Cathedral, the Center and Headquarters. This is for the

whole Church, for all of us." It deserves the support of all of us! The Primate ended by saying, " Our people are the Church, they are one and inseparable. To deny it is to deny ourselves."

Canada has 25,000+ Armenians. The Diocesan Council resolved to group the Armenian communities under a separate Vicarate. The question of forming a separate Diocese is the prerogative of the Catholicos.

The Diocesan budget was discussed.

1974 - \$357,900

1975 - \$431,000, accepted

projected 1976 - \$520,000

Proposed amendments to the bylaws were submitted. Much discussion ensued as to acceptance of others to be made. Accepted was an amendment to Article 56 of the Diocesan by-laws to read "The Diocesan Assembly is a permanent body and shall consist of elected lay delegates, parish council chairmen, all Deacons, all Priests including Bishops, under the jurisdiction of the Diocese.

Amendments 2 and 3 were defeated. Many proposed additions to the bylaws were submitted, some accepted, others defeated.

Clergy stipends were briefly discussed. A basic schedule was presented, but it was pointed out that it is only basic and not a fixed stipend, Actually the stipend in each parish is to be arrived at within the parish with its priest.

An election of new officers was carried out.

To Diocesan Board of Trustees - Nubar Dorian, Union City, N.J.

To Diocesan Council

Reverend Avedikian, Detroit

Reverend Kouzoulian, New York City

The Unity Committee presented its report. The plan is not one of cooperation and coexistence with separate bodies, but oneness, that there be " one Church body and one Church head." There cannot be two

primates, two Dioceses. Then there would not be a minority segment, because it would be and should be oneness. Regarding Unity, many meetings were held with the other group with the demands and impasses discussed. As yet, they have not been resolved. The committee was then instructed to continue its efforts.

The 1976 assembly will be in Philadelphia.

The 73rd Annual Diocesan Assembly was adjourned.

, Respectfully submitted,



Robert Bogdasarian

Elected Delegate of
St. Gregory the Illuminator
Armenian Church
Binghamton, New York